

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /031 R

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY PANAMA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 185224

EXDIS

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PN, CU

SUBJECT: PANAMA'S RECOGNITION OF CUBA.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY KUBISCH CALLED IN PANAMANIAN AMBASSADOR GONZALEZ-REVILLA THIS AFTERNOON AND READ FROM PREPARED TALKING POINTS AS FOLLOWS:

1. WE HAVE NOTED THE ANNOUNCEMENT MADE BY THE GOP ON AUGUST 20 TO REESTABLISH DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH CUBA.
 2. WE RECOGNIZE THAT AS A SOVEREIGN, INDEPENDENT STATE PANAMA MAY, OF COURSE, TAKE WHATEVER FOREIGN POLICY DECISIONS IT CONSIDERS ADVISABLE.
 3. WE APPRECIATE THE GOP'S INFORMING US IN ADVANCE OF ITS DECISION.
 4. WE ARE, NEVERTHELESS, DEEPLY CONCERNED OVER THE GOP DECISION TO PROCEED UNILATERALLY ON A MATTER OF SUCH IMPORTANCE AND COMPLEXITY FOR THE INTER-AMERICAN SYSTEM, PARTICULARLY WHEN CONSIDERATION OF HOW TO DEAL COLLECTIVELY WITH THE CUBAN ISSUE WAS UNDER ACTIVE CONSIDERATION BY A NUMBER
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OF OTHER WESTERN HEMISPHERE COUNTRIES, INCLUDING NEIGHBORS

OF PANAMA AND THE UNITED STATES.

5. WE ARE AWARE OF THE CUBAN ATTITUDE TOWARD THE INTER-AMERICAN SYSTEM AND THEIR STRATEGY IN PROMOTING ACTIONS WHICH WOULD WEAKEN IT. WE ALSO KNOW OF THE PRESSURES THEY ARE WILLING TO EXERT TO GAIN THEIR OBJECTIVES.

6. THROUGH THE TREATY NEGOTIATIONS WE HAVE BEEN TRYING OUR BEST TO ESTABLISH A NEW PARTNERSHIP WITH PANAMA WHICH WOULD CARRY THROUGH TO A NEW TREATY.

7. I WISH TO EXPRESS THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT'S MOST SERIOUS REGRET THAT THE GOP CHOSE TO ACT INDEPENDENTLY IN THIS MATTER RATHER THAN TOGETHER WITH OTHER LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES AND THE UNITED STATES AS CALLED FOR UNDER THE RIO TREATY AND THE RESOLUTION OF 1964.

2. AMBASSADOR GONZALEZ TOOK EXTENSIVE NOTES.

3. WHEN THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FINISHED AMBASSADOR GONZALEZ ASKED FOR A CLARIFICATION ON POINT 5. THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY REREAD THE PARAGRAPH PUTTING PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON THE WORDS QUOTE WE ALSO KNOW OF THE PRESSURES THEY ARE WILLING TO EXERT UNQUOTE. HE SAID THAT HE COULD NOT GO FARTHER THAN THIS. (GONZALEZ GOT THE MESSAGE.)

4. ON POINT 6 AMBASSADOR GONZALEZ SAID THAT THE GOP AGREED THAT BOTH SIDES WERE TRYING THEIR BEST TO ESTABLISH A NEW PARTNERSHIP BUT IT HAD NOT HAPPENED YET. THERE ARE NO SIGNIFICANT CHANGES WHICH HAVE TAKEN PLACE WHICH THE PEOPLE OF PANAMA CAN SEE OR TOUCH. THE UNILATERAL ACTIONS WHICH THE U.S. COMMITTED ITSELF TO UNDERTAKE ARE NOT POSSIBLE, AT LEAST FOR THE REST OF THIS YEAR. THERE IS FRUSTRATION IN PANAMA BECAUSE OF THE LACK OF ACTION. QUOTE THERE IS GOOD WILL IN WASHINGTON BUT NO ACTION IN PANAMA. UNQUOTE. HE SAID THAT THIS WAS A PERSONAL IMPRESSION BUT THAT HE IS SURE THAT IT REFLECTS THE POSITION OF HIS GOVERNMENT.

5. THE MOVE TO RECOGNIZE CUBA WAS A MOVE TO GAIN SUPPORT AND TRUST OF THE PANAMANIAN PEOPLE. IN ANSWER TO A QUESTION

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TION BY ASSISTANT SECRETARY KUBISCH, AMBASSADOR GONZALEZ REPLIED THAT HE THOUGHT THAT THERE HAD BEEN PROGRESS IN THE NEGOTIATIONS BUT THIS PROGRESS COULD NOT BE DEMONSTRATED TO THE PEOPLE. HE SAID THAT RECOGNITION OF CUBA WILL HELP THE NEGOTIATIONS. IT HELPS CREATE AN ATMOSPHERE THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF PANAMA IS NOT SELLING OUT TO THE UNITED STATES. IT NEUTRALIZES THE FAR LEFT AND GAINS TRUST FROM A WIDE SEGMENT OF THE PANAMANIAN POPULATION.

IN U.S.-PANAMA BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP HE VIEWS RECOGNITION

AS A GOOD MOVE. CUBA HAS BEEN A MODERATING INFLUENCE ON THE LEFT WING IN PANAMA AND HAS BEEN HELPFUL TO THE GOVERNMENT OF PANAMA IN PROCEEDING WITH NEGOTIATIONS. PANAMANIAN LEFT-WINGERS WHO HAVE TRAVELLED TO CUBA HAVE RETURNED WISER AND MUCH MORE MODERATE ON THE CANAL ISSUE.

6. HE SAID THAT ALL OF THESE THOUGHTS HAD BEEN EXPRESSED TO AMBASSADOR BUNKER BY FOREIGN MINISTER TACK PRIOR TO THEIR TAKING THE ACTION THEY DID. THEY EXPECTED THAT AMBASSADOR BUNKER WOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO EXPLAIN THEIR POSITION TO SECRETARY KISSINGER IN THESE TERMS. HOWEVER, THE RESPONSE WAS SO FAST THAT THEY WONDERED WHETHER WE HAD UNDERSTOOD THE FULL RATIONALE FOR THEIR MOVE.

7. ASSISTANT SECRETARY KUBISCH SAID HE APPRECIATED GONZALEZ'S EXPLANATION AND COMMENTS AND INDICATED THEY WOULD BE MADE KNOWN TO THE SECRETARY. KISSINGER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: RECOGNITION, DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS ESTABLISHMENT, MEETINGS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, MEETING REPORTS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 AUG 1974
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: boyleja
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974STATE185224
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: JBKUBISCH/WGBOWDLER;ARA/PAN:PFMORRIS:VV
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740232-0952
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740822/aaaaasmn.tel
Line Count: 134
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: boyleja
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 18 SEP 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <18 SEP 2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <26 FEB 2003 by boyleja>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PANAMA'S RECOGNITION OF CUBA. ASSISTANT SECRETARY KUBISCH CALLED IN PANAMANIAN AMBASSADOR
TAGS: PFOR, PN, CU, US, (GONZALEZ-REVILLA), (KUBISCH)
To: PANAMA
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005